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## **BARRAGA: SHARING THE ROAD SAFELY WITH SCHOOL BUSES**

Legislator Tom Barraga (R-West Islip) would like to take this opportunity to wish all the school aged students and their parents in his district a safe and productive school year.

Back-to-school safety encompasses a variety of topics one of which is school bus safety. According to the National Safety Council school buses are one of the safest forms of transportation on the road today but the reality of school bus safety is that more children are hurt outside the bus than inside as passengers. Most of the children who lose their lives in bus-related crashes are pedestrians, 4 to 7 years old, who are hit by the bus or by motorists illegally passing a stopped school bus.

It is very important to know and follow the proper laws for sharing the road safely with school buses:

Children are the least predictable pedestrians and the most difficult to see. Please watch carefully for children near school buildings, in areas where school buses are traveling or where there are signs for school zones or bus stops.

School buses use yellow flashing lights to alert motorists that they are preparing to stop to load or unload children.

Please remember it is illegal to pass a school bus that is stopped to load or unload children. Red flashing lights and an extended stop sign arm signals to motorists that the bus is stopped and children are getting on or off the bus. **YOU MUST STOP – IT IS THE LAW.** This also includes school buses that are on the opposite sides of divided highways, on multiple lane roadways, in parking lots and on school grounds. The only exception to this law is if the bus driver or a police officer signals that you may pass the bus.

Parents talk to your children about how to behave safely when traveling to and from school. Remind them to walk at least six feet away from the sides of a school bus, to always cross in front of the bus and to never walk behind the bus.

A few simple precautions can save lives.